

I joined over a quarter of the Senate who voted for the Senate welfare reform bill but rejected the changes made in the conference report. I said then that we should not trade in an admittedly imperfect system for one that is certainly not better, and perhaps may prove much worse. The same is true today.

I have been persuaded by the process of debate and projections on the likely impact of this bill on my State that this welfare bill will do far more harm than good. It will cause hardship to State and local governments, throw more than a million more children into poverty and hurt rather than help the Nation's efforts at true welfare reform.

The bill will clearly increase the burden on States and local governments. Poor States will, as always, be particularly hard hit. For example, the bill requires progressively more hours of work, from a greater percent of each State's case load every year, with States losing cumulatively more funding each year they fail to hit their targets. While I am a strong proponent of work requirements as an integral part of welfare reform, I am skeptical of this approach. And I am not alone. The National Governors' Association [NGA] feels it will be very hard to meet these targets, especially because the bill allows few exemptions for those who will have the hardest time finding work. And if a State fails to meet these difficult targets they lose funding for the next year's program. The irony of this penalty is that the punishment assures that the violation will occur again and again, as a State has less and less Federal money each year to try and meet their employment targets. This leaves states with two choices—use state and local funds for education, training, and child care, or throw more people off the roles so it will be easier to hit their percentage targets.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has said that, over 6 years, this bill falls \$12 billion short of the funding needed to meet the work requirements of this legislation, and about \$2.4 billion short in child care resources. New Mexico is particularly at risk if this bill does not live up to its promise. It is one of the few States in which the welfare caseload is currently increasing, even though the benefits paid are below the national average. Who will be forced to pick up the shortfall? State and local governments will.

Further, last year in New Mexico, 239,000 recipients in 87,000 households relied on food stamps. About \$28 billion in savings realized by this bill will be in food stamps. Such cuts to funding benefits erode the integrity of the safety net. I say again that we are trading in an imperfect system for one that may prove much worse.

Legal immigrants are clearly among those who will be hurt by passage of this bill. I support the immigration bill now in Congress and its effort to make immigrants and their sponsors responsible for immigrants' welfare. But this

bill goes far beyond those provisions. There are over 3,000 aged or disabled legal immigrants receiving SSI benefits in New Mexico who may abruptly be cut off if this bill becomes law, and thousands more immigrants who have no sponsor for any number of reasons who may also lose benefits under this bill.

In the course of this debate, the Senate rejected an amendment that would have permitted States to use funds from their Federal block grant to offer vouchers to maintain basic non-cash benefits such as food, clothing, and shelter for children if their parents' benefits expire after 5 years. The refusal of the Senate to allow States to provide such vouchers will hurt New Mexico, where one third of the children less than 6 years old—almost 50,000—live in families with incomes below the poverty level.

Ours is a great Nation, enjoying low unemployment and real prosperity. Our common goal is to ensure that all Americans willing to work hard have the opportunity to share that prosperity. We all want to eliminate public assistance as a way of life while preserving temporary protections for those truly in need of help. But we must figure out a way to do this without denying the basic needs of innocent children for food, clothing, and shelter, and without driving State and local governments further into debt. •

#### NATIONAL HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDS COMMISSION

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of calendar No. 440, S. 1577.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1577) to authorize appropriations for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission for fiscal years 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the bill be deemed read a third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be placed at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 1577) was deemed read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 1577

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDS COMMISSION.

Section 2504(f)(1) of title 44, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (F) by striking out "and" after the semicolon;

(2) in subparagraph (G) by striking out the period and inserting in lieu thereof a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

"(H) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1998;

"(I) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1999;

"(J) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2000; and

"(K) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2001."

#### EXTENDING MOST-FAVORED-NATION TREATMENT FOR CAMBODIA

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of calendar No. 398, H.R. 1642.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1642) to extend nondiscriminatory treatment (most-favored-nation treatment) to the products of Cambodia, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Finance with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

#### SECTION 1. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) despite recent increases in acts of repression by the Cambodian Government and growing government corruption that has contributed to substantial environmental degradation, Cambodia has made some progress towards democratic rule after 20 years of undemocratic regimes and civil war, and is striving to rebuild its market economy;

(2) extension of unconditional most-favored-nation treatment would assist Cambodia in developing its economy based on free market principles and becoming competitive in the global marketplace;

(3) establishing normal commercial relations on a reciprocal basis with Cambodia will promote United States exports to the rapidly growing Southeast Asian region and expand opportunities for United States business and investment in the Cambodian economy; and

(4) expanding bilateral trade relations that includes a commercial agreement may promote further progress by Cambodia on human rights and democratic rule and assist Cambodia in adopting regional and world trading rules and principles.

#### SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF NONDISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT TO THE PRODUCTS OF CAMBODIA.

(a) HARMONIZED TARIFF SCHEDULE AMENDMENT.—General note 3(b) of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States is amended by striking "Kampuchea".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) applies with respect to goods entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after the effective date of a notice published in the Federal Register by the United States Trade Representative that a trade agreement obligating reciprocal most-favored-nation treatment between Cambodia and the United States has entered into force.

#### SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

The President shall submit to the Congress, not later than 18 months after the date